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1	2
4	5

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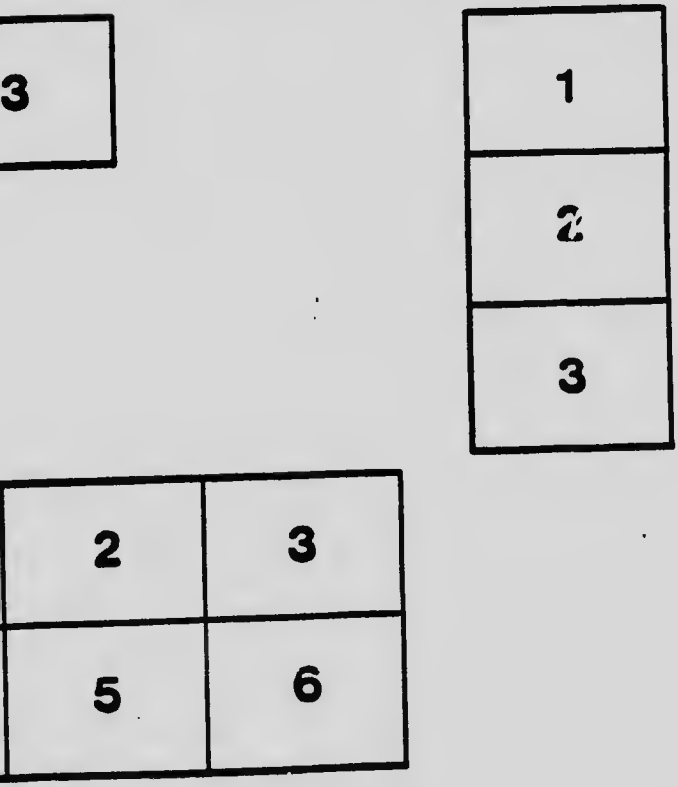

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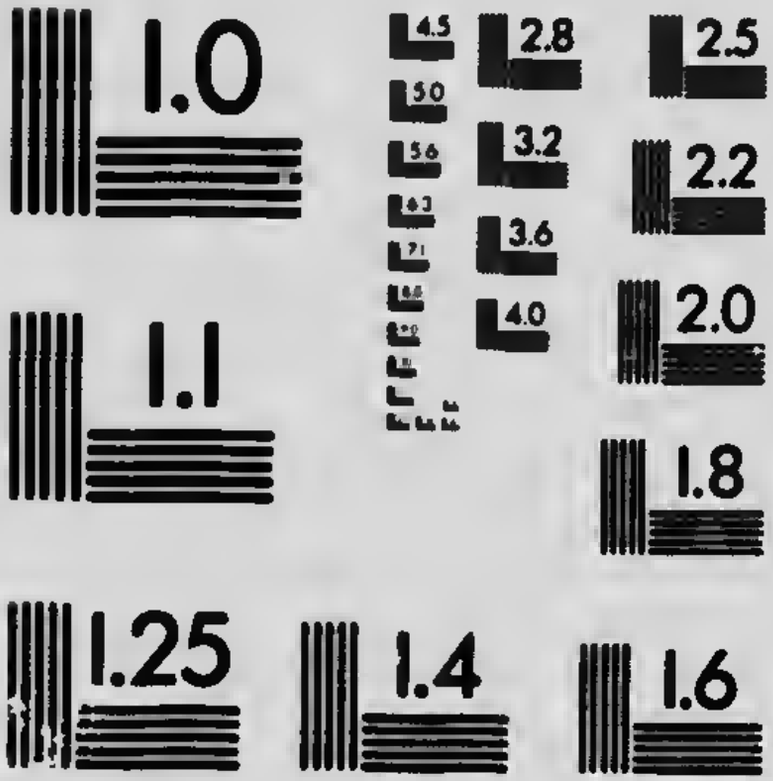

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ONE BIG UNION

GENERAL HEADQUARTERS:
NORTH WEST BUILDING, VANCOUVER, B. C.

DOES NOT
Advocate overthrowing the government by violence.

IT DOES
Advocate education of the working class that they may understand government.

DOES NOT
Preach bloodshed, riot, anarchy, or sabotage.

IT DOES
Contend that only by a change in the present basis of distribution of wealth can rebellion be avoided.

DOES NOT
Ask for a fair day's pay for a fair day's work.

IT DOES
Propose that the *worker should receive the full product of his toil.

DOES NOT
Claim that the interests of capital and labor are identical.

IT DOES
Claim that '*Labor produces all wealth.'

DOES NOT
Divide the workers into many different sections.

IT DOES
Provide a common membership card.

DOES NOT
Have Initiation Fees ranging from $5.00 to $50.00 or more.

IT DOES
Have a maximum Initiation Fee of $1.00.

DOES NOT
Make either age, sex, color, race or creed a barrier to membership.

IT DOES
Urge that the 'Workers of the World Unite.'

(*) By the terms WORKER or LABOR we mean all those who by useful work of hand or brain, feed, clothe or shelter; or contribute towards the health, comfort and education of the human race.

BULLETIN NO. 8.

HD8101
O54
1920

THE GENESIS OF THE O. B. U.

In March, 1919, a convention of trade unions affiliated with the American Federation of Labor met in Calgary, Alberta.

There were some 250 delegates present representing unions from the head of the Great Lakes to the Pacific Coast. The delegates reported that their organizations were almost unanimously dissatisfied with and opposed to the divisions in the ranks of Labor caused by the craft union policy of the A. F. of L., and the control of the rank and file by officials.

It was decided to take a referendum vote on the question of forming a One Big Union of wage-earners with a common membership card. The referendum was carried by an overwhelming vote and the original draft of the O. B. U. Constitution was prepared in June, 1919, and the first membership card was issued in July.

Although originally brought into being by Canadian Trade Unionists, the movement has found favor with the workers in the U. S. A., and is steadily spreading over the North American continent.

Fifty Thousand Members in Seven Months.

In the first seven months of its existence the O. B. U. issued over fifty thousand membership cards, and although bitterly assailed from the start by the employers, representatives of the government, and reactionary labor officials of the A. F. of L. still continues to increase in power and in membership. The reason for the wonderful growth of the O. B. U. is that the old craft union methods are no longer effective in securing improved conditions for the workers, in fact, they have failed to maintain the standard of living in the face of the improved methods of production, labor saving machinery, etc.

The workers organized in the craft unions spend a great deal of their time and most of their energy in fighting each other, because of craft strikes and jurisdictional fights; in the O. B. U. the Common Membership Card prevents that.

Craft Union Policy.

Jurisdictional scraps are caused by two or more unions quarrelling over whose members shall do a certain class of wo[illegible] are the workers are all members of the One Big Union this question [illegible] arise.

One of the most important policies of th[illegible] [illegible]ons affiliated with the A. F. of L. is trade, or craft, autonomy; fo[illegible]se, th[illegible]re are seventeen different trade unions affiliated with the Build[illegible] [illegible]rades' Department of the American Federation of Labor. Each of these unions has jurisdiction over a certain section of the building trades, each makes its own agreement with the employers, and usually when one Union is on strike the other unions stay at work, thus helping to break the strike. Those staying at work have contracts with the employer that expire at different dates and their contracts prevent them from coming to the assistance of the union in difficulty.

The American Federation of Labor is in the same position as a general, who, seeing his infantry being destroyed, would refuse to bring up his cavalry and artillery, and other divisions of the army to their assistance, and would give as a reason that he had an agreement with the enemy not to use more than one division of his army at a time. That typifies the tactics of the A. F. of L.

Changed Methods of Production.

In the days gone by, when the skilled craftsman produced an article by himself largely by hand work, the craft union organization correctly reflected his interests on the job, but with the introduction of modern methods of production the skilled worker has been reduced to a large extent to the position of a machine tender or specialist, who alone contributes but one or two operations in the production of the finished article. Thus we see the shoemaker, who formerly produced a complete pair of shoes by hand labor, today tends a machine in a factory with hundreds of fellow workers, through whose hands each shoe passes before it is complete.

In the Building Trades where a few years ago the carpenters used to erect a house by their own efforts, now it requires the services of from fifteen to twenty specialists to erect a modern dwelling.

It is, therefore, obvious that if the bricklayers stay on the job and set door and window frames, while the carpenters are on strike, and the carpenters nail on lath when the lathers are on strike, that the boss will be able to defeat them all in time.

Geographical or Industrial Organization.

This shows the need for industrial organization, but there is also the need for "geographical" or district organization, because the average worker is compelled to often change his occupation in search of a job, and more often changes his occupation than he changes his location, and in those cases when the members of different crafts have managed to get together and completely tied up the particular industry in which they were engaged for the purpose of maintaining or securing improved conditions, they have discovered that workmen in other local industries have a large contributing influence on the success or defeat of their strike.

For instance, where all the various trades in the shipbuilding industry have been forced to join in a general strike for some reason or other, they have found that union street car men would carry the scabs to work; union engineers, brakesmen and firemen on the steam roads would haul the material for the scabs to work with; union cooks and waiters would feed the scabs and union seamen, firemen and stewards would take the boat to sea after the scabs had completed it.

There have been splendid examples where this has not been true, and where the workers in other industries than the one affected, have directly assisted those on strike, but it has been in spite of the craft divisions and jealousies.

State Intervention in Industrial Disputes.

There is another factor in industrial disturbances of any size and that is the "state." When the state steps into an industrial dispute, either in the guise of city, provincial, or federal authority, it does so usually in the garb of a neutral or third party, but ultimately throws its weight on the side of the employers.

In the event of governmental interference on the side of the employers in a coal mining dispute on Vancouver Island, the Lumber Workers, Railroad Workers, and Sailors of B. C. may be of more assistance to the coal miners on the Island than the coal miners of Nova Scotia, Pennsylvania, the State of Washington, or even the miners of the neighboring Province of Alberta.

How the O. B. U. Functions

Therefore the workers are organized in the O. B. U. into local units covering certain occupations or industries according to the wish of the membership, and each local unit has control of its own local affairs and funds.

All the local units in a city or district elect representatives to a Central Labor Council or District Board, and these Councils or Boards have control of the affairs of the O. B. U. in their respective districts; therefore, while each unit has control of its own business, when any condition arises that concerns the members of other units, or is liable to involve them in a strike, then the business is handled by the entire membership concerned through the Central Labor Council or District Board.

A strike cannot be called except by vote of the membership.

The membership have the power to recall their officers at any time.

The common membership card makes for greater working-class solidarity.

You do not have to pay a new initiation fee every time you change your occupation.

Join the One Big Union TO-DAY. If there is not a branch in your locality become a member at large; for members at large the Initiation Fee is $1.00; dues 50 cents per month.

The members at large are supplied weekly with a copy of one of the O. B. U. labor papers.

Write out your application today, stating your name, address and occupation, and mail to General Secretary One Big Union, 401 Northwest Building, Vancouver, B. C.

The One Big Union calls upon all wage workers to organize, irrespective of nationality, sex or craft, into a Workers' Organization, not according to craft, but according to industry, so that we may be enabled to more successfully carry on the everyday fight over wages, hours of work, etc., and prepare ourselves for the day when production for profit shall be replaced by production for use.